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Executive Director

July 20, 2004

Dear Member of Congress:

LLEGÓ, the National Latina/o Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Organization, strongly urges you to oppose H.R. 3313, the Marriage Protection Act (MPA). As the only national organization advocating on behalf of the Latino LGBT community, we believe the MPA singles out LGBT individuals for unfair and unequal treatment under the law.

First, by eliminating federal court jurisdiction over questions of interpretation of the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), the MPA shields DOMA from federal judiciary review, thereby shutting out a distinct group of people from the federal courts. This runs counter to the basic Constitutional principle of Equal Protection.

Second, the MPA disrupts the “checks and balances” laid out in our system of government. In order for individuals to be protected from overreaching by the legislative and executive branches, an independent judiciary is necessary to maintain the principle of separation of powers.

Third, by removing access to federal courts, the MPA deprives individuals of their Fifth Amendment right to Due Process.

Furthermore, LLEGÓ contends that civil rights are neither established nor won by popular vote, but rather by access to a fair and unbiased judicial and legislative process.

On behalf of the Latino LGBT community, we strongly urge you to vote no on H.R. 3313.

Sincerely,

Martín Ornelas-Quintero
Executive Director